

Proper Fuel Storage on the Farm

Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 701



DEFINITION

Diesel fuel, gasoline, and other type petroleum products on the farm should be properly stored above ground in an environmentally safe manner.

GENERAL INFORMATION

A Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) plan, which outlines proper fuel storage, operation and maintenance, and emergency procedures, should be developed for farms with on-site fuel storage.

Fuels on the farm should be stored at locations that are at least 50 feet from all buildings; as far as practicable but not less than 100 feet from any water body, stream, or water conveyance structure; at least 150 feet from an up gradient water well; and at least 300 feet from a down gradient water well. Fuel storage should never be located within a flood plain, wetland area, or where the high water table is within 6 feet of the ground surface.

Individual fuel tanks that are 55 gallons or larger and have a combined capacity of 1,320 gallons or more should have a secondary containment facility constructed around them. This facility will ensure that any leaks or spillage of the fuel is contained and does not pollute the surface and ground waters. The containment facility should be able to store at least 110% of the volume of the largest tank. Acceptable materials for containment include treated and compacted soil, synthetic liners, impervious concrete or concrete blocks, or double-wall tanks. *A registered professional engineer in the State should always design containment facilities.*

Fuel storage tanks should be elevated at least 12 inches so that any leakage could be easily detected. Storage tanks should also be protected so vehicles operating

near the tank cannot accidentally hit and puncture the tank. Fencing of the facility may be necessary to minimize unauthorized use or vandalism. Fuel storage locations should always be marked with signs indicating "Fuel Storage" and "No Smoking". Tanks should have a fuel level gauge and all piping connections should be made to the top of the tank instead of the bottom to avoid leaks or inadvertent spills.

Fuel containment facilities are much easier to operate and maintain if the facility has a protective roof to avoid the collection and possible contamination of rainwater. If roofs are used, they should be made of non-combustible materials.

The areas around the fuel storage facility should be covered with vegetation. Areas utilized by vehicles should be properly constructed utilizing heavy use area protection.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Drip pans should be placed underneath valves or other connections where minor leakages could occur. Valves for rainwater discharge from the containment facility should remain locked until the water is inspected and any pollutants removed and properly disposed. A discharge log should be maintained indicating inspection dates, quality of discharged rainwater, and how pollutants were properly handled.

Soil, which becomes contaminated by a spill, should be immediately cleaned up or removed according to the SPCC plan and the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) Field Operations Division, Contaminated Soil Management Guidelines.

If a spill occurs that reaches, or has the potential to reach a stream or other waterbody, or the rainfall runoff from contaminated soil has a visible oil sheen, you should contact ADEM, the National Response Center at 1-800-424-8802, and the Alabama Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-843-0699. You should be prepared to report the following information:

- Your name, address and telephone number,
- The exact location of the spill,
- Your company name and location,
- The material spilled and the estimated quantity,
- The source of the spill,
- The cause of the spill,
- The nearest waterbody with the potential to receive the spill,
- And the actions taken for containment and cleanup.

A responsible person on the farm should regularly inspect all fuel storage facilities.

REFERENCES

NRCS AL Conservation Practice Standard
Code – 701, Agricultural Fuel Containment Facility

AL NRCS Guide Sheets
AL 561 – Heavy Use Area Protection

ADEM Field Operations Division, Contaminated Soil
Management Guidelines.

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